English Language Learners:
Supporting linguistically and culturally diverse learners

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❝Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.❞
─Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

❝Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.❞
─Rita Mae Brown

❝Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow.❞
─Oliver Wendell Holmes

❝If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.❞
─Nelson Mandela

General strategies for working with English Language Learners

✓ Supply comprehensible input, just as parents talk motherese to help their young children acquire their first language.
  Comprehensible input means:
  • Simplified structures
  • Non-verbal language cues, gestures
  • Slow pace of discourse
  • Repetition of important words and phrases, paraphrasing
  • Progressive build-up of vocabulary
  • Use of specific names instead of pronouns
  • Explanation of idioms

✓ Respect and be aware of the stages in second language acquisition, especially the silent period. Do not force students to speak right away, before they are ready or comfortable in doing so.

✓ When students begin to speak, their speech is full of mistakes. Rather than correct mistakes, model appropriate forms.

✓ Create an environment that is relaxed and where students can be confident, not anxious.

✓ Create opportunities to interact with fellow students and negotiate meaning, sharing experiences through use of role-play, reader's theater, art, and drama.

✓ Teach through content so that not only language development but conceptual development occurs. Meaning is more important than grammar.

✓ Remember that receptive skills come before productive skills; oral language development comes before literacy.

✓ Recognize and support the native language of the English language learners. Even if you don't know the native language of the student, there are ways it can be acknowledged in the tutoring session. Students' self-esteem needs the extra support that can lead to a more rapid literacy development.

Think-Aloud Chart for Reading Comprehension

Thinking strategy _Mental process that good readers use_	Description _What the mental process entails_	Questions _Questions that promote this thinking strategy_
Activate prior knowledge	Recall previous experience and knowledge, making connections with text content, meaning, and style	What has happened in your life that is like this story? What have you read about or seen that relates to this topic?
Analyze formats	Predict characteristics and content of a book based on a review of formats — organization, graphics, and presentation of the text	Based on the title, cover, table of contents, headings, charts, tables, and pictures, what do you think this book is about? Can you predict what will be in each section?
Visualize	Identify and describe mental pictures and images that occur to the reader as text is read	What pictures or images pop into your head about a desert? Can you imagine what the scene/person/item looks like?
Form predictions	Apply growing knowledge of author and content to predict story developments or upcoming content	What clues are in the story about what will happen next? Based on the information we've read, what else will the author(s) discuss?
Make inferences	Combine analysis of the text with what you know of the world to form educated guesses about meaning	What is the characters' relationship, based on how they're acting? How will information in this graph influence public choices?
Generate questions	Wonder about text — what's the purpose, why this detail, what's missing, and what remains to be learned?	What questions do you have about what's coming up in the story? Does the chart on this page make you wonder about anything else?
Monitor understanding	Identify points of confusion about the text and analyze why they occur	Where did you lose track of what's happening in the story? Are there terms/ideas you don't understand on this page?
Fix confusion	Apply fix-up strategies for areas of confusion so that reading can continue	Can you reread that paragraph and look for clues about what's confusing you? What words do you need to know more about to be able to move on?
Synthesize content	Identify main ideas, summarize content, identify contrasts and make comparisons	Can you summarize the main points of this article in a few sentences? How are the main characters in each story the same? How are they different?

Building Vocabulary with ESL students
Rändi Douglas,

Do your volunteers and staff ever hear students say, "I just don't get it?" Often, especially with ESL learners, their confusion indicates low understanding of key vocabulary words in their reading or homework. Share the following information with volunteer tutors, mentors, and staff to help them support vocabulary development in children and youth.

Vocabulary size (the number of words a student knows, understands, and can use) plays an important role in reading ability and is cited by the National Reading Panel as one of the five key components of reading instruction. When you discover your student struggles with specific words, what can you do?

Useful General Strategies
First, work with the student to speculate on the word's meaning based on the context (sentence or paragraph) and root words; this activity builds important skills for independent reading. Ask questions like: "Can you think of another word that would make sense here? Are there any parts of this word that you know the meaning of? Based on what we've read so far, what do you think the word might mean?" Make notes about the student's response.

Next, help the student find the word's definition in an age-appropriate dictionary; this activity helps students find word meanings on their own. If the word has more than one meaning, read all definitions and work together to choose the best one. Compare the dictionary meaning with the student's own ideas, noting the differences in a positive way - "You did some good thinking before we looked up this word, and one definition is very close to what you said." Make cards or lists noting the words and definitions you investigate.

Finally, using the cards or lists for reminders, model ways that you use the new vocabulary words, and help the child use them at regular intervals over the next few weeks. Research shows that students retain new vocabulary best when words are personalized and used repeatedly in many different contexts.

Vocabulary Activities
Picture cards can be used with ESL students in many games to expand vocabulary and promote language understanding. Using index cards, work with students to create a "library" of picture cards for categories like: things we eat; what we wear; ways to travel, etc. Students can work from magazines to find pictures of simple images and paste them on the cards (hats, shoes, jacket). Games can be set up in several ways, but questioning is the basis of all of them. For instance, the leader spreads out many clothing cards asks "can you find a picture of something you wear on your feet in the rain." The participant will need to understand the question and pick out the appropriate card. When the card is

selected, go over the word(s) for that card with all students (the ones who don't know the word will then pick it up).

Word cards, made from index cards, can accumulate into a prized collection as a child learns many new words. The tutor can use word cards as a reference for word review. For a description of how to make word cards and a template, go to:

Word trees are useful in helping children identify or map families of words that share the same root, e.g., the root word "port" in transport, report, portable, etc. For a description of how to make word trees and a template, go to:

Word sorts help children create conceptual models for words that appear in the same context but have different meanings, e.g., words about music - guitar, melody, notes, lyrics, singer, chords, and strum. For a description of how to do word sorts and an example, go to:

The more children read, the more vocabulary they will gain. Target only the most important vocabulary words for these activities, as a break from reading, without taking too much time away from the important main activity -- reading itself.
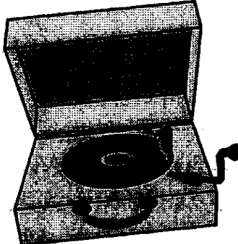
Word Cards

To create Word Cards, work with the student to:

- Write the word in the center of the card
- Write the definition (upper right corner)
- Use your ideas to write a meaningful sentence with the word (lower right corner)
- Find synonyms and antonyms for the word (upper left corner)
- Draw an illustration (lower left corner)

Remember that this word card becomes a marker; the word will only be integrated into the student's vocabulary through repeated opportunities to use it in a variety of contexts. Use words from these cards several times, and in different ways, over a series of tutoring sessions.
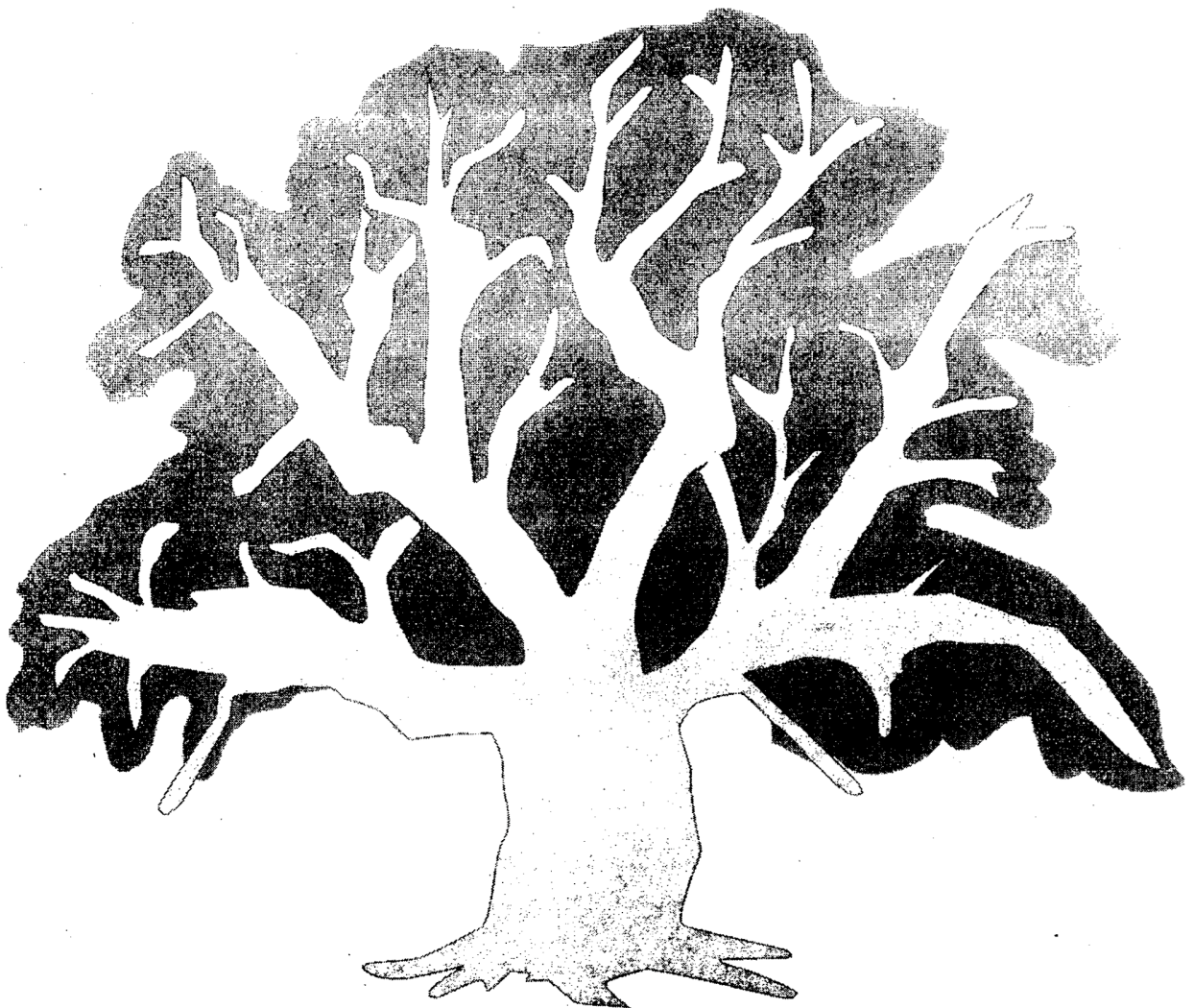
SYNONYMS:	DEFINITION:
ANTONYMS:	
ILLUSTRATION:	**WORD**
	SENTENCE:

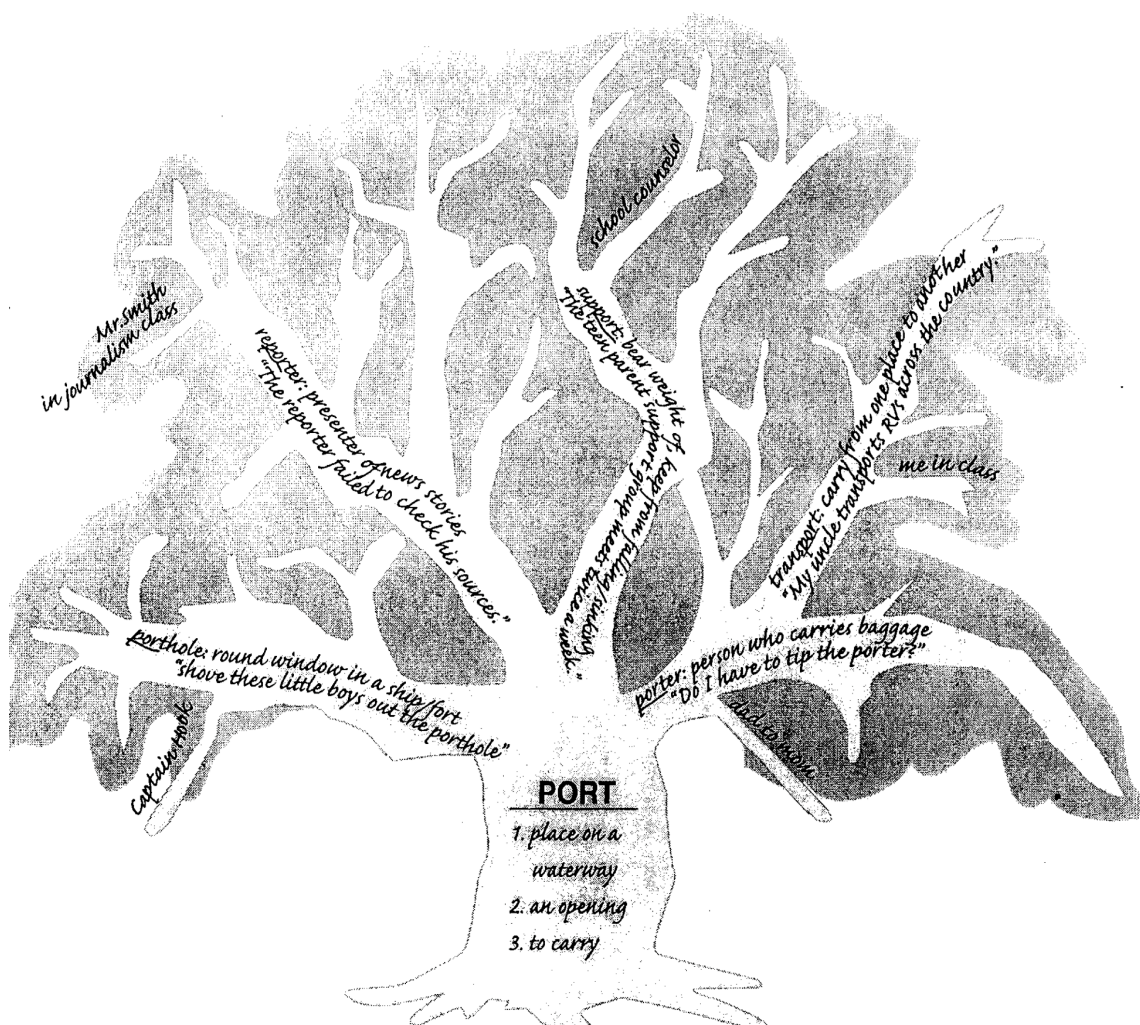| SYNONYMS: ancient, outmoded	DEFINITION: out-of-date, no longer useful
ANTONYMS: popular, in use, up-to-date	
ILLUSTRATION:	**WORD** obsolete
	SENTENCE: Gramp's old record player is obsolete, because they don't make records any more.

Word Tree

To make a word tree:

- Pick a root word common to your book or subject
- Write the root and common definitions on the tree trunk
- Draw branches and write words containing the root, along with their definitions, on each branch
- To each branch, add a sentence of your own using the branch word
- Add "limbs" to indicate people you hear using the word

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Mr. smith in journalism class

school counselor

support: bear weight of, keep from falling (mental, physical) "The teen parent support group meets twice a week."

transport: carry from one place to another "My uncle transports RVs across the country."

me in class

reporter: presenter of news stories "The reporter failed to check his sources."

porthole: round window in a ship/fort "Shove these little boys out the porthole"

porter: person who carries baggage "Do I have to tip the porter?"

captain hook

dad to mom

PORT
1. place on a waterway
2. an opening
3. to carry

Word Sorts

To create a Word Sort, start with index cards or sticky notes in two different colors:

- Select a subject area and identify 15 to 20 words common to the subject, but with different characteristics
- Write one word each on sticky notes or index cards of one color
- Stick them on the wall in random order
- For a closed sort (pre-determined categories), write the categories for the sort on a second color and put them in a row
- For an open sort (youth determines the categories), ask the student to study the words and create sort categories
- Sort the words by grouping the words under the categories

Here is an example of a completed "closed" Word Sort:

CLOUDS	CLIMATES	WEATHER CONDITIONS
stratus	mediterranean	snow
lenticular	desert	thunder
stratocumulous	temperate	hail
cumulonimbus	tropical	wind
cirrus	savannah	sunshine

9

ELL SIOP Notes: Worksheet

SIOP Strategies	Notes
Plan activities Establish goals	
Build background	
Speak clearly Build vocabulary	
Explain tasks many ways	
Use varied learning modes	
Plan group work	
Supplement textbooks	
Model think-alouds	

Simple Language-Based Games for English Language Learners

From the Internet Teachers of English as a Second Language Journal
(See the Resource List for a Web site)

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Toilet Paper Icebreaker   **Level:** Any Level

This activity is used as a "getting to know you", icebreaker on the first day of class. First, the teacher takes the toilet paper roll and takes several squares of toilet paper, then hands the roll of toilet paper to a student. The teacher tells the student to take some, more than three. After everybody in the class has some paper, we count the squares we have, then we have to tell that many things about ourselves, in English. The toilet paper is such an attention getter!

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Adverbial Charades   **Level:** Any Level

Each student is given a card with a familiar adverb on it--i.e. quickly, angrily, loudly, happily. Then the class tells the student to do something so they can guess what adverb is on the card. They can tell the student to do things in pantomime, like drink a bowl of soup, or really do it in class, like open a door or take a book from the teacher.

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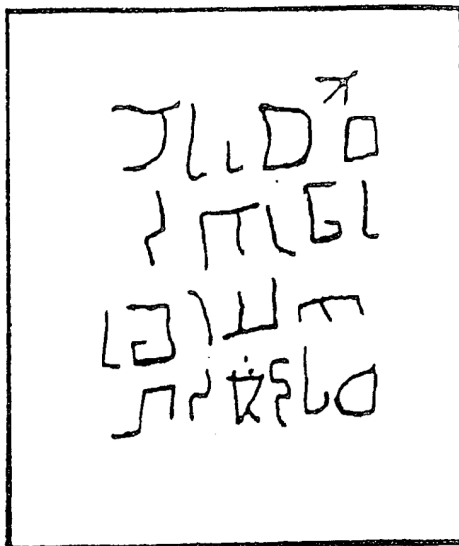
Guess the Object   **Level:** Any Level

The teacher prepares cutout pictures that are pasted or taped to index cards. One student selects a card and must describe it in English until another student can guess the object. This is very much like "20 Questions" but instead of the challenge being to ask questions, the bonus is on the cardholder to verbalize the description.

The teacher should be careful to select pictures that reflect the vocabulary level of the students. Simple objects, like "baby", "door" or "car" are good for beginners. Later on, more complicated pictures that suggest actions, scenes and relationships could be used, like: "mother bathing child".

Children's Writing Samples

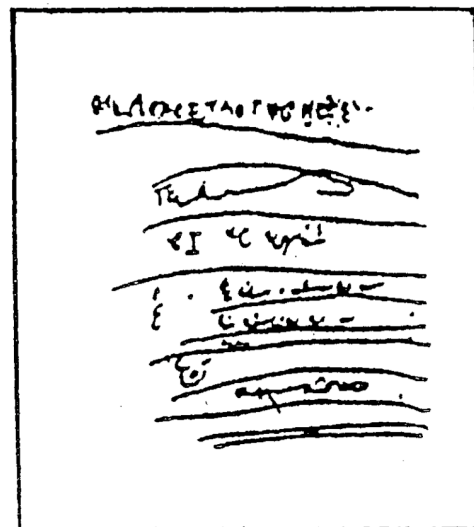Dawn, a four year-old from the US.
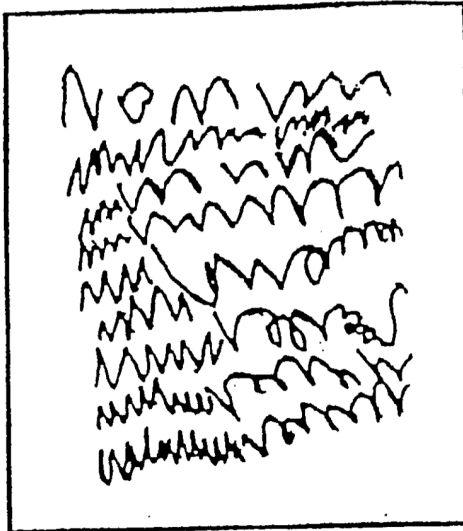
Najeeba, a four year-old from Saudi Arabia. Uses curlicue formation with lots of dots. She says, "I wrote it in Arabic and in Arabic we use a lot more dots than you do in English."

Ofer, a four year-old from Israel. Print right to left, then left to right. This looks like Hebrew, but it isn't.

Xiao-Di (Change this) Xiao-Di

9.2√

1. 我喜欢画画。		1. I like pekhr.
2. 我喜欢朋友。		2. I like fruand.
3. 我喜欢妈妈。		3. I like man.
4. 我喜欢猫。		4. I like cat.
5. 我喜欢爸爸。		5. I like fadr.
6. 我喜欢猴子。		6. I like mang ke.
7. 我喜欢老师。		7. I lke tehr.
8. 我喜欢狗。		8. I like Dog.
9. 我喜欢沙鱼。		9. I like shrk.
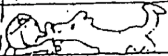
Age 7